Two Funeral

SERMONS

PREACHED

IN

St. SAVIOUR'S CHURCH

IN

DARTMOUTH.

Together

With a PREFACE, giving some account of the reasons, why they are now made publick.

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4° W. 59.

By *HUMFRY SMITH*, M. A. and VICAR there.

LICENS'D, *Feb.* 23. 16$\frac{89}{90}$. *Z. ISHAM.*

LONDON,
Printed for *Randal Taylor*, near *Stationers-Hall.* 1690.

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THE PREFACE,

TO THE

Inhabitants of Dartmouth *in* Devon, *Grace, Truth, and Peace be multiplied.*

My Friends and Brethren,

YOU, that know me, and the occasions of the two following Sermons, will, I doubt not, easily believe: that I was far, at first, from designing, they should ever become more publick, than the Preaching of them made them. As the space, allow'd for either can hardly be called Days; so I am very sensible, that performances of this kind, on which I have bestow'd more time and labour, have little in them to recommend them in an Age, which (God be praised) abounds with Practical Discourses of the greatest Excellency. They do not therefore come abroad, on a conceit of any thing extraordinary in the Contrivance; but only to stand the Charges, which have been drawn up against them: That some,

who could not, and others, who would not, hear them; may perceive at length, as I hope they will, that amongst the real imperfections to be found in them, there is, however, nothing at all of a ſpiteful humour.

I am ſure, I can truly ſay, that in thoſe few Years I have liv'd amongſt you, I have labour'd, as to give no juſt offence to the Church eſtabliſh'd (of the Lawfulneſs of whoſe Conſtitutions I am heartily perſwaded) ſo neither to any of thoſe who have been drawn to diſlike her Communion, and ſeparate from her. I do not remember, that the Regard I have, and the particular Obligations I am under to the former, have made me forgetful of a befitting Candour towards the latter: eſpecially in the publick diſcharge of that Holy Office, I am regularly call'd to. But, alas, you very well know, the cry hath been frequently otherwiſe; ſuch repreſentations having been made of me, as if I were guilty of malicious Reflections; and did not only, with thoſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, preach Chriſt of envy and ſtrife, but preach even Strife and Envy themſelves.

Phil. 1. 15.

The diſcourſes, which have been ſingled out as the chief Foundation of ſuch Reports, are theſe two now printed: which I put into your Hands, without any material

terial alteration from what they were in the Pulpit. Indeed some things, which were then omitted, I have here added; but whatever was spoken, you have, as near as may be, as it was spoken: and in those passages, which, I am told, have given occasion of offence, I am secure, I think, of exactness, even to the least word.

And now let me leave it to those, who have been pleas'd to censure me, to consider, whether the things are so faulty, as they have represented them? Or rather, whether they did not seek for cause of displeasure, where none was given? whether some have not thought fit to make reports, not so much of what they heard, as of what they expected; and others supplied the defect of Intelligence by a fruitful imagination?

The first of these Sermons was preach'd Octob. 24. 1687. at the Funeral of an aged Gentleman, to whom I was obliged for much civility: and whom, by reason of his coming sometimes to the Publick Worship (his absence at other times being eatily accounted for, from much sickness and infirmity) I thought no Nonconformist to the Orders of the Church of England. Indeed a little after his Death, I was inform'd that the Preacher in a separate Congregation had put in a

claim to him, and withal, that at the same time he was pleas'd, at least plainly to insinuate, that this discourse of mine (preach'd but two or three days before) was envious and reflecting.

The Crimes which soon after I was commonly censur'd for, not only in this, but several other places, you may remember, were principally these two: Reflection on the Person interr'd; in what I said about Riches, in the middle of my Sermon; and a spiteful Character of him, at the latter end of it.

From both these faults, I hope, the discourse it self will now sufficiently purge me. For as to the first, can it be with the least shew of reason contended, that what was said of the Worldling (*in compliance with a subject which the Church her self has recommended on such occasions*) *should be meant by me as a description of the deceased? I spake likewise of the* Voluptuous, the Ambitious, the Learned, *&c. And why should it be thought I aim'd at him in one, more than in any of the other? Can it be possible for any reasonable Person to think, that when I consider'd the vanity of Riches, and an immoderate love of them, I design'd to brand him for a Miser, whom, in the*

very same Discourse, I expressly commended, for a Just, an Upright, and a very Charitable Conversation.

This account of him was a part, you will find, of that other thing I am censured for, The Character at the latter end, which (being too sensible of the inconvenience, and sometimes mischief of Rhetorical Harangues in such cases) according to my custom, I did not intend should be long; or contain any thing in it, which had not the support of manifest truth. But as it is, I dare defie my veriest Enemies to shew any thing in it, in the least measure reflecting: For my part I think it might have been apply'd, without offence, to any Man that ever was, at least, beneath the Eminence of a Martyr, or an Apostle.

I declar'd that on his death-bed he was frequent in the acts of a Duty, which as it is extremely unsafe to begin on it, it is neither safe to give over on it, Repentance: at which passage some, I know, have been displeas'd. As if a penitent frame were not proper, at such a time as that is: or it were a reproach to the memory of a Christian, to say, he waited for the coming of his Lord, with an humble sense of his own unworthiness. I know not what

Rules may be given by some, for conducting the Devotions of a death-bed; but sure I am, that very excellent directors, advise Repentance at that season, even to Persons of the highest attainments, as a Duty still agreeable: Repentance for sins which have been committed through error and inadvertency; for sins which are the constant attendants of Mortality; as also for those which were long before considered and lamented. St. Augustine *was a Person, who, for above Twenty years before his death, shone as one of the brightest Stars in the Christian Church; and his Scholar and dear Friend that wrote his Life, did not surely design to lessen his Praise, in the place where he tells us; That the Good man more than a week before his departure, would not have his Eyes or Thoughts diverted from* David's *Penitential Psalms, but only now and then, when his Physicians came to visit him, or his Friends to bring him Refreshment: That he read them as they were plac'd by his order on the Wall near his Bed; that he meditated continually upon them, pray'd, and often wept, and so dyed.*

Possidius de vitâ *August.* c. 31.

But I advised my hearers at last to avoid the failings and defects of him I interr'd, as well as to imitate those things in him that were virtuous and holy; and this was another ground of Offence. Such advice,

it is true, I then gave, as I have on such occasions several times before and since. For is not what, you will find, I added, a very great truth, viz. That the best of us are infirm and fallible? And does not St. John tell us plainly, if we make any different Pretences, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us? It is the peculiar Glory of the Holy Jesus, to have given a Pattern to the World free from all blemish and imperfection; wherefore when one of the greatest of his Servants recommended the following of himself, he limited the Counsel to those Instances only, wherein he followed Christ.

1 John 1. 8.

1 Cor. 11. 1.

Having met with such usage on the score of this harmless Discourse: The regard that I had for my own injur'd Reputation drew from me three Letters to him, who, as I had reason to believe, gave some occasion to these Reports. But though I could get only some doubtful Answers to the two first, and none at all to the last; I should not have attempted this publick Justification of my own Innocence, had I not found it call'd in question again, because of the Second Sermon here printed.

This was preached on Nov. 21. 1689. at the Funeral of a Person, whom I look't upon as honest and peaceable;

peaceable; one who several times express'd much Friendship towards me, and to whom, as I am not conscious to my self, that I ever offer'd any injury whilst alive; so I am sure I intended none being dead.

But it was not long after his burial, that I was surprised with the news of no small clamour about this Sermon also, being told, that several had declared themselves offended at it, that at least some Passages of it had been put in writing, sent away as far as London, and there spoken against with much wrath and violence.

You, that will be pleas'd calmly to read it over, will, I believe, find it some difficulty to discover, where the Grievance lyes. And indeed the charge against it, though very heavy, hath been so sparing of Particulars: that I hardly know which are the Places I am to vindicate.

Besides the Text (which hath been disliked, but for which, I hope, you do not expect, I should go about to make an Apology) the only thing insisted on, that I can hear of, hath been a few words in the Conclusion: Words, which are thought to bear hard, if not on the Person gone down into the Grave; yet on some he hath left behind him. To clear my self fully from this Accusation, would be to mention some late Transactions, which

which have already made a noise not only in this Place, but in some sort through the Nation. I shall therefore attempt it no further than by this Appeal, which I make to every reasonable and intelligent Person, acquainted with our Circumstances, of what Perswasion soever, viz. *Whether the things I spake were not plain and notorious Truth? and whether they were not such Truth, as was fit to be spoken by me on the occasion I then had for it?*

These things, Brethren, are what I thought proper to say to you by way of Introduction to the ensuing Discourses: which, being thus drawn into the World, may they be in some degree or other useful to all that read them: May they contribute something towards an Holy neglect of the present things, *and a due provision and regard for* those that are to come; *The great ends, for which both of them were sincerely design'd, and to which it is now heartily pray'd, they may be successful, by*

Yours in all the Offices of

Christian Love and Duty,

H. S.

The

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Christian Love and Duty,

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The First

SERMON.

PSALM 39. 6.

Surely every man walketh in a vain shew.—

ADversity is one of the best Instructers, Wisdom being not so easily learnt in any other School, as in that of Affliction.

Prosperity, like some over-strong Light, dazles the Eyes, that they can take in but imperfect and confus'd notices of things: but Calamity sets all right again, as it prepares the Mind for a due Estimate or Judgment; so it removes all the false Colours which are apt to cozen us.

David, according to the Opinion of several Commentators, labour'd under some extraor- Vide Theodoret. Oper. tom. 1. p. 544.

dinary preſſure; as when the foregoing, ſo when this *Pſalm* was penn'd. And hereupon we have him mounted up a degree higher than ordinary above Earthly things, freed from the falſe Notions and Opinions of the World, ſtript of all the prejudices of ſenſuality, and paſſing a right judgment on this mortal life. *Verily*, ſays he, in the foregoing Verſe, *every man at his beſt ſtate is altogether vanity*: and his words in my Text ſeem to be yet more comprehenſive. *Surely every man walketh in a vain ſhew.*

In imagine Dei— Ita legêrunt S. Ambroſius, S. Hieronymus, & alii non pauci.

Not to ſay any thing of a different reading made uſe of by ſome of the Ancients, the words, as here render'd agreeably to the manifeſt deſign of the *Pſalmiſt* in this place, give us an account of humane life, the condition of Mankind in this preſent World. Short indeed the Sentence is, but very expreſſive, as you will ſoon perceive by viewing a little the ſeveral particulars we find in it: Namely theſe four,

1. The Perſons concern'd.
2. Their Buſineſs, or conſtant Employment.
3. The Scene of their Travel.
4. The Aſſurance with which the *Pſalmiſt* thus repreſents them.

First,

First, We find in the Words, the Persons concern'd in this Sentence of *David*: *Every man*; every one that lives and breathes. All the whole Race of whatsoever Sex, or Age, or Condition. There is not the least exception, either of the highest, or else the lowest. All are concluded, from him that's clothed in Purple, to him that's cover'd with Rags: from the Prince on the Throne, to the Slave that grindeth at the Mill. Πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ὁ ζῶν, Sept. v. 5.

Secondly, Their Business, or Employment: *They walk.* They are constantly going onward; they are in perpetual motion, always Travellers whilst on Earth. The journying they are engag'd in, towards their long home, is not to be interrupted by an hours stay, or so much as one minutes rest.

Thirdly, We have the Scene of this travel or motion, a Scene proportion'd to the thing that moves in it: *A vain shew.* About the meaning of which word there is some difference amongst Expositors.

Some there are, who take it for *a Shadow*; and with these agrees that Translation our Church makes use of in the office of Burial. *For man walketh in a vain shadow.* A Shadow which is a

thing gloomy, but yet empty, having nothing more in it, but only to cover us with darkness. Man, whilst here below, is in a Region of obscurity, wanders in a dark uncertainty, a place infected with the mists of Ignorance and Error. He cannot look into the nature and events of things: he stumbles up and down without any knowledge of his way, unless guided and directed by an extraordinary Light sent down from above.

R. Jona, R. Jol. & Dakim, per חשך exp. in *tenebris* ambulat. vid. Cl. Castelli Lexic. Hepraglot. in voce צלם.

By others the word is thought to signifie *an Image*, accordingly that rendring is added in the Margins of some Bibles: *Verily every man walketh in an image.* He goes on in a life which seems indeed to be something to him; but he is cheated all the while: such degrees of death are blended with it, that it may justly be called only a Picture or faint resemblance of Life. And then he converses with things that seem to be very shining, but yet they are a kind of Phantômes, like the Colours of the Rainbow, which are only the Image of the Sun broken, and return'd back by the drops of a Cloud; or like that representation of our selves appearing in the Glass; which, however delighted in, is nothing else but emptiness.

Ἐν εἰκόνι. Sept.

Οὐδὲν ὄφελος τῶν ἐν εἰκόνι γινομένων οἱ ζῶντες διαφέρουσιν ἄνθρωποι. Theodoret. in locum.

Another

Another variety is to be found amongſt Interpreters (occaſion'd by a different reading) not unfit perhaps to be mentioned. For as ſome read, *Man walketh in a vain ſhew*, ſo others have it, *as a vain ſhew*: according to the uſage of Scripture in ſome places, applying this Shadow not to the Scene of his motion, but to the Man himſelf. Man paſſeth on as a Shadow, *as a ſhadow that declineth* or *fleeth away*. Or, underſtanding the word to ſignifie *an Image*, it agrees to him alſo, to wit, a thing that (according to what ſeems the meaning of an Ancient Writer on this place) is acted, for the moſt part, like the Figures in a Pageant, which look as tho' they mov'd and ſpake: whereas the whole is due to the Skill and Management of an inviſible Artiſt. But,

בצלם

בצלם

Pſalm 102. 11.

Job 14. 2.

Ἄνθρωπος ὁμῶς διαλλάττει βαίτῃ. Apollinar. Metaphraſ.

Fourthly, and laſtly, We have in the words the confirmation of this Sentence of *David*, *Surely*. He declares it with great aſſurance, having doubtleſs conſider'd the reaſons which ſupport it, and ſeen it ratified by much experience. 'Tis the reſult of a very diligent Enquiry, and exact Obſervation.

The things we find in the Text being thus particularly noted, the ſumm of what it aims at appears to be this, *That this mortal life is a very*

empty

empty thing: *That our condition here in this present World is great vanity.* This Truth, with the Divine assistance, I shall briefly illustrate, and so go on to the uses of it.

Whatever Opinions, my Brethren, we are apt to take up about our present abode, it will certainly be found, upon a due examination, a Condition very unsatisfactory, void of every thing, that is a solid Foundation of Happiness or Contentment. The greatest Pleasures of it are but Delusion: the greatest Advantages but Shew and Appearance.

You are to observe however, that this is asserted concerning humane life as humane, abstracted from those Spiritual things, which give it something of Being; without the Improvements of Grace, which add some solidity even to the most fleeting things, and bring in some imperfect Felicity, where was nothing else but Misery.

Orig. Hom. 1. in *Ps.* 38. *Origen*, 'tis true, in one of his Homilies on this *Psalm*, makes no doubt of applying this Sentence of the Royal Prophet, even in some sort, to things Spiritual. That is, as comparing their present imperfection with what's promis'd, and shall be reveal'd. 'If *Moses* himself, says he, were alive again, he would know

'in

'in part, and propheſie in part; he would ſee 'but darkly through a Glaſs, and teach us Fi-'gures: ſo that tho' he muſt be ſaid to live, it 'would be only a life of vanity. And would 'you know the reaſon, continues he, why we 'ought to call it Vanity? It is, becauſe ſuch 'things are to have an end: For when that 'which is Perfect is come, then that which is in 1 *Cor.* 13. 10. 'part ſhall be done away.

Indeed it muſt be granted, that this preſent life, tho' it may yield ſome *real Happineſs* to them, that ſeek it in the ways of God, cannot yet afford a *perfect Happineſs*. Something of ſubſtantial good ſuch Perſons will be able to find, very low however in the degree, and having in its compoſition a large portion of different things to leſſen or allay it. But then as this mortal life is divided from the conſiderations of Religion, as it commonly pretends higheſt, and is ſo apt to draw the Eyes and the Hearts of Mankind, it is nothing at all, but an empty and deluding appearance. To it in this ſenſe (the ſenſe I ſhall only conſider it in) the Verdict of *David* is univerſally applicable: 'tis vain without reſerve or exception. Declarations of this kind are frequently to be met with in Holy Writ. As St. *Paul* endeavour'd to take off the

the *Corinthians* from too great a concern for worldly things, he added this reason of his advice: *for the fashion of this world passeth away.* The Fashion of this World, saith the Apostle, making use of an expression borrowed (as some learned Men have observ'd) from the Theatre; to the Scenes of which he compares the several states or changes of our life. Things that may please, surprize or amaze, according to the different Designs of the Contriver: but in the mean time are only shew or representation.

1 Cor. 7. 31.

The things which are seen, saith the same Apostle to the same People, *are temporal.* They are measured by Time, and partake of the Affections or Properties of it: and that is such a thing as you cannot grasp or discern the least substance in. That part of it which is gone is already become nothing, that part which is to come is as yet nothing; and the present Minute, ere you perceive it to be, vanisheth away. Of this nature is Time, and of the same are all Temporary things: They are either growing or else perishing, having nothing at all in them which may be depended upon as stable and certain.

Συμφυὴς ἄρα τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ ζώοις τὸ καὶ φυτοῖς, ἢ τοῦ χρόνου διέξοδος ἐπέστη, ἐπειγομένη ἀεὶ καὶ παραῤῥέουσα καὶ μηδαμοῦ παυομένη τοῦ δρόμου. Hæc S Basil & plura ejusmodi homil. 1. in Hexaemeron. vol 1. Oper. Bas p. 7. Edit. Paris 1618.

We

We need instance in no other places of Scripture, but that which purposely treats of this argument, *the Book of Ecclesiastes*. *Solomon*, the Author of it, was the Person who made the most diligent search into the things of this life; he proved them by very curious, too curious, experiment: *He saw all the works that are done under the Sun, he gave his heart to know wisdom; yea, to know madness and folly.* *Solomon* also was the Person in the World, who could best judge of the things of this life, being endued with Wisdom beyond all that came before him, or that should come after him. And now what says he? having made a large induction of the severals that may pretend to worth, he declares the Sentence: *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity.*

Eccl. 1. 13, 14.

Eccl. 2. 3.

2 *Chron.* 1. 12.

Eccl. 12. 8.

And as such Notions of humane life have been entertain'd by wise Men within the Church: so they have been likewise by some without it. *Thou hast tried*, saith the Emperour *Marcus Antoninus* to himself, *thou hast tried to find Felicity in the things of this World, having wandred through so great a part of them: but what thou hast sought for,*

Πεπείρασαι γὰρ περὶ πόσα πλανηθείς, οὐδαμοῦ εὗρες τὸ εὖ ζῆν ἐν συλλογισμοῖς, οὐκ ἐν πλούτῳ, οὐκ ἐν δόξῃ, οὐκ ἐν ἀπολαύσει, οὐδαμοῦ. M. Antoninii Imp. de seipso, & ad seipsum, l. 8. §. 1.

thou hast not found: not in the arts of Reasoning or Discourse, not in Riches, not in Glory, not in Pleasure, not any where. This was the judgment of a Prince inferior to *Solomon* indeed in Wisdom; but, as a learned Man hath noted, exceeding him much in Wealth and Greatness. He, who was Lord of more Kingdoms, than that King of *Israel* was of great Towns, declares, That he could not discover in them all τὸ εὖ ζῆν, the means or ingredients of living Happily.

M. Casaubon *in his Preface to his English Version of that Emperour's Meditations.*

Many of the wiser Heathens had such low Sentiments of these transitory things, that they would not so much as allow them to be called *Beings*, ascribing that name to the Divine Essence alone. Hence the distinction of *Plato*, of *That which is, but is not generated: and that which is generated, but is not.* The God infinitely existing of and from himself deserves the name of *Being*; but the corruptible things, we converse with, are too empty and vain to claim that Title.

Ἔστιν οὖν δὴ κατ' ἐμὴν δόξαν πρῶτον διαιρετέον τὰ δὴ τὶ τὸ ὂν μὲν ἀεὶ, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον· καὶ τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν ὂν δὲ οὐδέποτε. Plat. Tim. p. 526. Edit. Lugdun 1590.

This it is probable enough he took from that Inscription in an *Egyptian* Temple, giving some account of the nature of the Divinity supposed

Τὸ δ' ἐν Σάϊ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς (ἣν καὶ Ἶσιν νομίζουσιν) ὁδὸς ὀπτηχρηθὲν εἶχε τοιαύτην, Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ πᾶν τὸ γεγονὸς, καὶ ὄν, καὶ ἐσόμενον —— Plutarch. de Iside & Osiride Oper. Tom. 2. p. 354. Francof. 1620.

to

to dwell in it: *I am all that was, is, or ſhall be*; which is ſo like that in *Exod.* 3. 14. that we can hardly doubt of its Original. Ὁ ὤν, ſay the *Septuagint*, *I am that I am.*

For a more diſtinct view of the vanity of this preſent Life, it will be convenient a little to conſider theſe three things:

The Enjoyments
The Deſigns } of it.
The Continuance

1. *The Enjoyments* of it: *The things in the World*, as the Apoſtle calls them, that is, ſuch as are held to be valuable in it, and are commonly the Objects of Deſire. And now, certainly, a little Enquiry into the Nature of them, a few ſerious Reflections on the Experience we have already had of them, will abundantly diſcover their Emptineſs. 1 *Joh.* 2. 15.

A Chriſtian Writer long ſince compar'd them all to *a Dream*, wherein the Mind is ſometimes employ'd indeed about things, which are very taking; but then the Morning comes on, the delightful ſlumber paſſeth away, and preſently we

Aurum, voluptas, gaudium,
Opes, honores, proſpera,
Quæcunq; nos inſtant mala,
Fit mane, Nil ſunt omnia,
Prudent. Cathem. Hymn. 1.

perceive all the Being they had was only in the imagination.

St. *John* gives us a ſhort Catalogue of the moſt conſiderable Enjoyments, which this World
1 *John* 2. 16. can boaſt of: namely: *The luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life*; that is, Pleaſure, and Profit, and Honour. Theſe *are all*, ſaith he, *which are in the world*: And can theſe, any, or all of theſe contrive an Happineſs, or purchaſe for us any real Contentment? Should you make a trial of all the Pleaſures that are under the Sun (thoſe Pleaſures which chain the Senſes, and bring a kind of Enchantment upon the Mind) and then review them a little after cooly and deliberately: you would certainly find, they were not at all anſwerable to the expectation was rais'd of them. Yea the ſhew, they make at a diſtance, begins to vaniſh commonly as ſoon as you come near them: and when you think to take hold of them, like ſome phantaſtical appearances, they paſs away between your Fingers.

Eccl. 2. 1, 2. *I ſaid in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleaſure*; ſays *Solomon*. Thus he ſets out with a ſtrong reſolution to be Happy; but ſee, alas! the wretched diſappointment in the very next words: *Behold this alſo is vanity.*

vanity. I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it?

If there be any reliſh in the Delights of ſenſuality, it is by a kind of violence to our ſelves, that we are capable of it. How many degrees down muſt a Reaſonable and Immortal Spirit be ſunk, before it can begin to perceive any taſte in them? Its nobler Faculties muſt be all bound faſt, and laid aſleep: it muſt become an unthinking inconſiderate thing, like the Soul of a Beaſt. And whenſoever it recovers its own Liberty, and the uſe of its proper Powers: How doth the joy turn preſently into bitterneſs! It torments it ſelf with Anguiſh, Indignation, and Remorſe! The pleaſure ends in loathing and deteſtation.

Theſe are the Enjoyments of *the voluptuous*; and no greater ſure are thoſe of *the worldling*. Follow him to his Treaſure, and there ſee him with a mighty diligence endeavouring to ſecure a ſort of things ſo tranſitory, that they even *make to themſelves wings, and fly away*: a ſort *of things, which moth and ruſt corrupt, and thieves break through and ſteal.* See him there, laying up his heaps of Cares, making to himſelf a Thorny Pillow, which will diſturb his reſt, and interrupt his ſleep. Yea behold him there, admiring and even adoring

Prov. 23. 5.

Mat 6. 19.

what

what will not afford him in a day of diſtreſs a minute of Eaſe, or a drop of Refreſhment. That darling of his Soul his Gold, notwithſtanding the value he puts on it, is only a little ſhining Earth; and notwithſtanding it pretends to a kind of Eternity, is yet a thing that periſheth. *The Gold that periſheth*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7.

As for greatneſs and honour, they who have had the largeſt ſhare of them, have ſufficiently ſhewn that they were far from being contented. Some further thing hath been ſtill in their Thoughts and their Wiſhes to render them unquiet. He, that, from being the King of a little Country, carried his Dominion over the greateſt part of the then known World, could not yet find enough to ſatisfie his thirſt of Glory. And now the Reaſon of this is evident: for the things, which Ambition purſues, being indeed without ſubſtance; the mind, that is infected with it, meeting with diſappointment in every purchace, is forced to ſeek relief from ſome new hope or imagination.

What is there in Grandeur or Eminence, to repay the labour and difficulties with which it was obtain'd? What is there to ſweeten the hurry, and noiſe, and ſlavery, it unavoidably engageth in? What is there to ballance all the danger and

fatal

fatal issues of it? What is there, I say, to do all these things; but only a little popular Air, an insignificant Title, the wonder of the Croud, things light and empty as the breath of Fools?

Having food and raiment, saith St. *Paul*, *let us be therewith content*: And the advice hath this strong Reason to back it, *viz.* That in having these two things, we have all that is really useful. A little Food you may have, a corruptible thing: So our Saviour calls it in that Command of his, *Labour not for the meat that perisheth.* A little Raiment you may have too; but such, as when Art hath done all it can do for it, is outdone by the Lillies of the Field: So our Saviour tells us in that Declaration of his, *I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not array'd like one of these.* The greatest industry in the World will afford you no other advantages, but such mean things: Things which serve indeed, at present, the Necessities of a mortal Condition; but which you are not to carry hence, as being utterly useless in that state hereafter, wherein Shame, and Hunger, and Thirst shall have no Place, and Men shall be as Angels.

1 Tim. 6. 8.

Joh. 6. 27.

Mat. 6. 29.

2. The Vanity of this Life will also appear from the Consideration of *the designs* of it; the nature of those Purposes, which are ordinarily taken

taken up, and followed by the greateſt part of Mankind.

Suppoſing ſomething of real good in theſe Temporal things; yet the purſuit of that good is ſo difficult in it ſelf, and often meets with ſo many croſs Accidents, that to be buſie in it, is altogether vain and fooliſh: *Becauſe to every purpoſe*, ſaith Solomon, *there is time and judgment; therefore the miſery of Man is great upon him: For he knoweth not that which ſhall be; for who can tell him when it ſhall be?* Much skill, and obſervation, and weighing of things are neceſſary to a regular Conduct; the right Seaſon, and proper Circumſtances of Actions being hard to be found out. And after theſe matters are fitly diſpos'd, the Event is ſtill covered with a Veil of darkneſs, which time alone is capable of removing.

Eccl. 8. 6, 7.

He that contrives to gratifie a Carnal Appetite, that is, to be as happy as a Swine, frequently miſſeth his end by ill management. Some unexpected Accident interrupts the deſign, or ſome Diſeaſe falls upon him, which quite overthrows it. He that is reſolved to be Rich, and therefore riſeth early, and ſits up late, and eats the Bread of Carefulneſs; finds often to his Grief, that the Purpoſe will not proſper in his Hands: The toil and diligence will not ſucceed, nor yet the

the injuſtice and rapine; having with *Pharaoh's* lean Kine devoured the fat ones, he is ſtill lean as before. The Man who plods and flatters, undertakes the vileſt Employments, and ſets himſelf out to the baſeſt drudgery, complys with every Intereſt, is made a Property at pleaſure, and becomes the Tool of every Party, to arrive at length at the height he propoſeth to himſelf; finds at laſt his labour in vain, after ſo much endeavour, the fine Projection miſcarries, the thing aim'd at proves to him inacceſſible, or elſe only a Precipice whence he tumbles down. But theſe, you will ſay, are the Counſells of wicked Men; and no wonder therefore that they are ſo frequently blaſted; there may be yet other deſigns, which as they are more juſt, ſo likewiſe more ſucceſsful; as, the Deſigns *of a Family, of knowledg and wiſdom.* True it is indeed that theſe deſigns appear ſomewhat more conſiderable, being ſuited to the innocent Inclinations of Mankind; and therefore ſuch as we may more juſtly expect ſhould proſper; but yet we cannot put them out of the number of Vanities.

He, whoſe deſire and labour is for his Poſterity, thoſe Children which he hopes to leave behind him, is often diſappointed; diſappointed even when he thought he was entered on the Poſſeſſion

of his Wishes. His Sons and his Daughters, on whom his Love was placed, either dye to his sorrow, or live to his greater sorrow; are either snatcht away and thrown into the Grave, or else are left *to consume his Eyes, and to grieve his Heart.*

He that is eager too in the pursuit of knowledg, pursues a thing, which, without a divine Stamp upon it to set it above the World, is nothing else but vanity. *Solomon* reckons it last indeed; but yet he reckons it amongst Impertinencies, amongst Vexations. *Of making many Books there is no end, and much study is a weariness to the flesh.* *Justin Martyr*, being a Heathen, was carried with a great deal of earnestness to the study of the *Grecian* Learning, pass'd through the several Schools of *Aristotle*, *Pythagoras*, and *Plato*, sought very curiously for something satisfactory amongst all their Precepts and Discoveries; but nothing of that kind was it possible for him to meet with, till he encountered a plain aged Christian, who talk'd of Revelation and a Messiah; who reason'd of Bliss and Immortality, Redemption and eternal Glory.

Eccl. 12. 12.

Hæc de se fusius narrat B. *Justinus Mar.* in dialogo suo cum Tryphone Judæo paulo post principium.

3. Our Life is vain in respect of *the continuance* of it. Did this World afford such things, as can make us happy, and were the method of compassing

passing them described unto us in plain and unerring Rules; yet after all, the frailty of the Creature, to whom the fruition belongs, is so very great, as to give the whole the name of Vanity.

The man, our Saviour speaks of, thought, no doubt, he had made an ample Provision for felicity. The materials, he chose for it, were already at his command; and he caress'd himself with the sure expectation of the happy issue. *This will I do*, saith he, and *then say unto my soul, take thine ease.* But, alas! all the while he forgets the very thing, which will destroy the Project, and Heaven puts him in mind of it. *God said unto him, thou fool, this night thy Soul shall be requir'd of thee.* Luke 12. 19.

Talia agentem, atque meditantem mors prævenit, says the Historian, concerning one of the greatest of Men; as he was now designing the greatest things. He that by an uninterrupted course of study, and diligence, and valour, and success, had rais'd himself to a height, that no man ever arriv'd at before. And he that was now forming the designs of being yet higher and more glorious, tumbles in his Blood, and is forsaken by all, till at length three of his Servants have so much regard for the Emperor of the Sueton. vit. Jul. Cæs. c. 44.

World, as to take him up, and carry him home.

The Meditations are very good, though found in a Book which is very bad, that were occasion'd by the view of a Mariner Shipwrackt, and cast dead upon the Shore "Go now, ye Mortals, says one who escaped the danger, "go, and fill your "Minds with vast Purposes: Go now ye Provi- "dent, that are settling the Succession of your "Wealth for a thousand years. See here the "Person, who but yesterday took an account of "his Riches, and appointed the day in his thoughts "when he should be at home. Alas, how far "short is he fallen of the designs he had imagined! "But this is not the Lot, continues he, of those "alone who commit themselves to the Faith of "the Seas. One Man miscarries through the de- "fects of his Armour, another by the fall of his "Chariot, and a third is buried in the Ruines of "the Place he came to worship in. Sometimes "Meat destroys him that eats it, and sometimes "the want of it him that eats it not. If there- "fore we reckon aright, Shipwrack is every "where.

Petron. Arb. Satyric. cap. 75.

Indeed the continuance of Man is so short, so transitory, that the Sacred Writers themselves seem, as it were, at a loss for words sufficiently to expres

expreſs the Vanity of it. Sometimes this mighty thing Life (which we have ſo high an eſteem for, for the ſake of which we plow the Seas, and rip up the Earth, yea, are ready to turn the World upſide down) ſometimes it is call'd! What I pray? Not a *Julian* Period, or a *Platonick* Year, not a Summ to be reckon'd by Centuries or Ages; but a Duration to be meaſured by the Continuance of a Flower, or a Leaf of Graſs: *All fleſh is as graſs, and all the glory of man as the flower of graſs: the graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.* And at other times an Emblem is made uſe of, that may expreſs a greater uncertainty: a Vapour is choſen, ſomething exhaled out of the Earth on a ſuddain, and toſs'd away with the Wind. *What is your life? it is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.*

1 Pet. 1. 24.

Jam. 4. 14.

And not to ſearch into the Ages paſt, and ſo pick out here and there ſome extraordinary inſtances of humane Frailty: conſider but what you have ſeen with your own Eyes, think upon the ſpeed of ſome, and the infancy of others, which have gone before you; yea lay *the threeſcore years and ten* (which a few, amongſt many Thouſands, come up to) into the Balance againſt Eternity: And then all theſe expreſſions

will appear proper and natural, being but ſuted to that haſte and uncertainty they would deſcribe.

Indeed, Brethren, let us but look into our own frame: let us examine the Materials out of which we are formed, the fineneſs of thoſe Threads with which we are woven; let us conſider a little how many Thouſand very tender Parts are neceſſary to keep on the work of Life, and withal what variety of diſorders all theſe parts are conſtantly liable to: And then it will appear unto us one of the greateſt wonders the whole Creation preſents us with, that ſuch things, as we are, ſhould be able to continue, not for twenty, or thirty, or forty years; but only for two or three days, or two or three hours together.

Having thus ſhewn you a little *the vanity of humane Life*: I now come to make uſe of the Conſideration of it: and the things I would recommend, as plainly following from it, are theſe three:

Not to be in love with it.
To endeavour for a better.
To account the poſſeſſion of that better, no evil.

1. Our

1. Our condition in this present World, being so vain a thing, let us manifest our belief of this *by not being in love with it*. *Wilt thou* (says *Solomon*, speaking of some Temporary Enjoyments) *set thine eyes upon that which is not?* Wilt thou be fond of what has no real Being, doat upon Shew, and court a Shadow? Let not reasonable Creatures, I beseech you my Brethren, be guilty of any such extravagance. Let us not please our selves with Emptiness, and be zealous in the pursuit of Trifles. Let us not place our Desires and our Hopes upon what will miserably deceive us. In short, let us not seek for satisfaction there, where nothing is to be found but only Vanity. Prov. 23. 5.

The truth is, we have been so accustomed to mistakes, that such Doctrine, as this, is for the most part somewhat hard of digestion. We have many of us been so long us'd to a good opinion of the World, that we know not how to begin to think meanly of it: Yea if we open our Eyes a little at any time, and see somewhat into the fallacy; some shining Appearance dazles our sight: If we awake a little, some soft Air fans us again into our former slumber, wherein we are pleas'd with fantastick Ideas, with a Dream of Felicity. The Gentleman in *Arrianus*, returning

returning from Banishment, seem'd to himself abundantly satisfied of the Follies of Ambition, and the Vanity of the World; declaim'd earnestly against his former course of Life, and resolved now for a Philosophical Retirement, to spend all the little time should be further allow'd him, in a happy Ease and Tranquillity. With these Thoughts and Designs he addresseth himself to his Journey; but he meets as he goes on with Letters from *Cæsar*: and the force, alas! of such a Charm is not to be resisted, his Stoicism melteth presently away, and all the late Purposes are now quite forgotten.

—Ἀπήντησε αὐτῷ παρὰ Καίσαρος πινακίδες. Ὁ δὲ λαβὼν, πάντων ἐκείνων ὑξελάθετο, καὶ λοιπὸν ἓν ἐξ ἑνὸς ὀπισεσώρευκεν. Arrian. Epictet. l. 1. cap. 10.

Be sure therefore to use your utmost Industry not to be impos'd on: cast off the prejudice of unreasonable Lusts, all that Favour and Affection which blind the Eyes, and warp the Judgment, that so at length you may be able to make a due estimate in this matter. For our Thoughts about these things are not meer speculation, where tho' Truth be desireable, we run no hazard in erring: But they are the very bottom on which we build our Happiness, according to the firmness of which it will either stand or fall.

Indeed there is a certain Light, through which if ye look on this mortal Life, you cannot be mistaken

miſtaken in it. There is a certain temper of the Mind, wherewith if you conſider the World, you will ſee through the *fucus* or diſguiſe, which uſually covers it, and perceive truly what it is, and what regard it deſerves. I ſhall give you a little direction in this matter.

(1.) Conſider this Life, as it appears *in the day of Affliction*: Conſider it as the Warmth and Sunſhine ceaſe, as the Clouds gather over your Heads, and a Storm approacheth. Conſider it as the Body is ſet upon the rack of a Diſeaſe, or the Mind afflicted. What taſte have ye, O all ye Earthly things, what Reliſh, what Sweetneſs is there in you at ſuch a time as this is? What Refreſhment has the Man, who lies ſcorching upon his Bed, who is tortur'd with Pain, or whoſe Soul is pierced by the Arrows of the Almighty? What comfort has he then in thinking he is the Maſter of ſo many Acres, or ſo many Bags; that his Table is loaden with Delicacies, and his Houſe bedeck't with no common Art; that he is a Perſon of Name, and hath been the talk of the World?

(2.) Conſider this Life as it appears *on the Day of Death*. Imagine that, a Summons being ſent you for a ſpeedy Removal, an Hour or two were all the time you could further expect in

this World: and then consider what thoughts you must needs have of this present Life, as you thus lookt back upon it from the brink of Eternity.

Certainly, Brethren, tho' we are now apt to put so great a value upon it, it will then appear a wretched impertinence, when all the Treasures of the *East* and *West* will not bribe us to a Smile; When Ceremony and Attendance become nauseous: When there shall be no Taste in Meat or Drink, neither will the Ear hear the Voice of Singing Men or Singing Women: When the Soul is preparing for its everlasting Flight, and the Body to go down to that Earth out of which it was taken.

Dying and Dead Mens Words, by Dr. Lloyd. Lond. 1673.

But, that you may know, how the World looks to a Person on the Day of his Death: I will give you the Thoughts of *two dying Men*, both of our own Nation, as we have them amongst other very good things in *a late Collection*.

Sir John Mason.

One as great a States Man almost as ever was, Privy Councellor to four Princes: whose Declaration on his Death-bed was this: 'I have seen 'the most Remarkable things in Foreign Parts, 'been present for thirty Years together at 'most Transactions of State, and have learnt 'this after so many Years Experience, That Se-

'riousness

'riousneſs is the greateſt Wiſdom, Temperance 'the beſt Phyſick, and a good Conſcience the 'beſt Eſtate: And were I to live again, I would 'change the Court for a Cloyſter; the buſtles of 'State for an obſcure Retirement; and the whole 'Life I liv'd in the Palace, for one Hours enjoy-'ment of God in the Chappel: All things elſe 'forſake me beſides my God, my Duty, and my 'Prayer.

The other, a Man of as much Reading, as any our latter Ages have afforded, who, when he came to die, amongſt all the Learning of the Sons of Men, which he had ſurvey'd, amongſt all the numerous Books and Manuſcripts he had perus'd and was Maſter of, could not meet with any thing that gave the ſatisfaction to his Soul, which he found in theſe words of St. *Paul*: *The grace of God, which bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.* *Mr.* Selden. *Tit.* 2. 11, 12.

(3.) Conſider too what this Life will appear *at the Day of Judgment*. That is the time, when all Diſguiſes ſhall utterly vaniſh, and every thing be ſeen in its proper Colours. Think therefore that you now ſtood before the Tribunal of the Lord Chriſt, and there it were required of you

to judge of that, for your esteem, and use, and abuse of which, you your selves shall then be judged. In such Circumstances as these, doubtless your Opinions of things would be very different from what they too commonly have been.

What will Greatness, and Honour, and Fame signifie, when there shall be no respect of Persons; when the obscure Slave will be upon the same Level with the Crowned Head; when there shall be no distinction known, but that of *the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left?*

Mat. 25. 33.

What will the having been the Possessor of a great deal of Gold and Silver, many Houses and much Land be then accounted of, when the whole Frame of the World is cracking and dissolving; *the earth burning up, and the elements melting with fervent heat?*

2 Pet. 3. 10.

Finally, What will the Memory of past Pleasures amount to, the Deliciousness of this Fare, or the Sumptuousness of that Cloathing, or the Sweetness of the other Enjoyment? Yea, how glad would many be, if no such things had ever been, then, when a strict account is to be given *of every thing that hath been done in the flesh?* But,

2 Cor. 5. 10.

2. If our Condition is so vain a thing, then hence also let us be stir'd up to vigorous and hearty *endeavours after a better.* Tho' our present Habi-

Habitation, or rather Place of our Pilgrimage be nothing else but Vanity; yet there is a Country, which we have heard of, abounding with substantial things.

Those that have seen it, and known it, and came from it, have made relations of what it is: They have spoken much of the Joys and the Glories of it, have told us, that nothing there is Dark, or Frail, or Transitory; but all things Pure, Clear, and Admirable, of a Goodness more extensive than our very Desires, Brighter than ten thousand Suns, and as Lasting as Eternity: yea, they have assur'd us that the things of it are *unspeakable*, beyond the power of Words or Description.

We have too sufficient ground to believe, that this blessed Condition is not such as cannot belong to us; but that we are capable of it, and were even Originally design'd for it, that, as the Author of the Book of Wisdom speaks, *God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an Image of his own eternity.* *Wisd.* 2. 23.

Yea more than all this, Solemn Overtures have been made, Messages have been sent to us: We have been directed, enabled, invited, perswaded with the greatest earnestness to come, and to secure to our selves this blessed Habitation.

And Oh, my Brethren, shall we not now think it worthy of our thoughts and our care? Shall

Shall we any of us neglect any longer to comply with those methods, which Heaven hath found out for transplanting of us from Vanity and Trouble into Bliss and Immortality?

It is not indeed any light performance, which will fit us for that better state; not a little Outside-Service, or a little Lip-devotion; no, nor now and then a pious Warmth, or a melting Temper; not a listing our selves in this or that Party, or being reckoned under such a Denomination. The passage through the strait Gate is not so easie as these things. But it is a *faith that worketh by love*, a due conformity to all the Evangelical Proposals, a *working* continually *with fear and trembling*, a having our Minds above the World, *using it so as if we us'd it not.* In short, a being Religious, Sober, Just and Charitable in our Conversation.

These are the Terms which the Angel of the Covenant requires; and shall we stand at the difficulty of them, since they lead to real and lasting Good? Shall we be discourag'd in an undertaking, that will advance us above the Vanity of this present Life, add some solidity even to these fleeting things, converting our perishing Riches into an Heavenly Treasure, and at length bring us to a glorious Eternity?

Thirdly

Thirdly and Laſtly, our Eſtate at preſent being vain, let us *account the poſſeſſion of that better one*, we have been ſpeaking of *no evil*. Let us not be unwilling to enter, when God's time ſhall come, upon theſe never fading Enjoyments our ſelves; or ſeem to envy the fruition of them to our departed Friends.

Indeed for thoſe, who are without the Pale of the Church, or for the negligent within it, to be amazed at the Apprehenſions of death, is but what is natural, is but what is too reaſonable. But for Chriſtians to be ſo affected, ſhews that ſomething is yet amiſs with them; that though they are *Iſraelites* travelling for *Canaan*, they have not quite forgot the things of *Egypt*; that ſome remains are ſtill in them of the Love of this preſent World, or elſe ſome Tincture of Infidelity.

Certainly, Brethren, if we are as we ought to be; if the Sacred Truths of the Goſpel are throughly aſſented to in our Minds; and the Power of Religion has new form'd our Hearts, we ſhall be ready to ſay under the expectation of our own deaths, with an humble Confidence in the Merits of our Redeemer, *Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly*; and at the departure of our Chriſtian Friends, *The Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.*

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As

As for our Neighbour and Friend whom we have now committed to the Grave, as I am not fond of such a Task in this Place, so I am not sufficiently qualified to give you the perfect Character of him. Our Christian hope is, that he hath exchanged a Scene of Vanity for eternal Glory. He hath long been exercised with a troublesome, a painful Disease, a Sacred Discipline sufficient to instruct him in the Vanity of the World, and, we hope, he was not unfruitful under it: Yea, he manifested that he was not, by an upright, and just, and, as I am inform'd, a very charitable Conversation. His Death-bed shew'd him Devout and Pious; and he was frequent in the Acts of a Duty, which as it is extreamly unsafe to begin on it, it is neither safe to give over on it, Repentance.

But I shall conclude all with that advice, which I have often given on such occasions; because it is some of the best I can give on such occasions. The Failings, the Defects, that you observ'd in him (for the best of us are infirm and fallible) learn to avoid. The things that were Virtuous, and Holy, Comely, and of good Report, resolve to transcribe and imitate.

The

The Second

SERMON.

ECCL. 4. 2.

I praiſed the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive.

PLato, in his Apology for *Socrates*, tells us, that That excellent Perſon made it his buſineſs for ſome time to find out a prudent Man: He diligently ſearch'd amongſt the ſeveral Ranks of People to diſcover, if it were poſſible, one truly Wiſe. Plat. Oper. p. 360.

A Task ſomewhat like it is that, which a more excellent Perſon, by a much more excellent Spirit, is engaged in here in this Book of *Eccleſiaſtes*. *He gave his heart to ſeek and to ſearch out by wiſdom, concerning all things that are done under heaven*; he made a very ſtrict enquiry, and the thing Eccl. 1. 13.

he lookt for was Felicity: what ſort of People are in the Condition moſt deſirable and bleſſed.

He ſeeks for theſe amongſt the Gay and the Pleaſant, thoſe who give themſelves up to the gratification of all their irregular Appetites; but here he cannot find them. He continues his enquiry amongſt the Induſtrious and the Careful, and with the ſame error and diſappointment. He ſearcheth amongſt the Knowing and the Great, the Plodding and the Active, the Men of Deſign and Buſineſs: yea he runs through the ſeveral Orders of the World; but his labour is ſtill fruitleſs, all the diſcovery he is able to make being only this, VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT.

His ſearch being unſucceſsful above Ground, he tries withal a little what can be met with under it, views the hollow Eye-pits, the ſhatter'd Bones, and mouldring Aſhes in the Grave. And of this enquiry, behold the reſult, *I praiſed the dead*, ſays he, *which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive.*

The general Deſign of the Preacher in theſe words ſeems plain enough, they being a declaration, that in the accounts of Happineſs, the Condition of *the dead* is to be prefer'd to that of *the living*.

The

The former of these two states is what he lately examined; and tho' (as he thought fit to govern himself) he met with nothing in it but corruption and uncertainty; yet *returning and considering* the Calamities of Life, Death appear'd desirable, and he began to praise it. Like one amaz'd with many grievances before his Eyes, he cries out, and seems to say such words as these: Death is the tying indeed, which humbleth the Pride of the highest Mortal, down to the level of the meanest Slave: yea some curious researches have afforded us but imperfect relations of the difference, it leaveth, between the Man and the Beast; however we cannot easily imagine it to be more intolerable than the present Bondage. Tho' the House we must all go to at last be so dreadful to us, that we are apt to recoil, and shrink, and not yield, at any rate, to be willing to enter it; yet is it possible to conceive more unsufferable things in it, than the Labours and Sorrows, which now almost perpetually oppress the Sons of Men?

A very ancient Commentator discovers a mystical Sense in this place, and would understand by the *dead*, such as are dead to sin; and by the *living*, those that still go on in it. An Interpretation, which contains a Truth,

Si renunciásti sæculo, si abjecisti vitia, si jam non moveris ad peccatum, sed mortuus es ad peccatum, melior es illo qui vivit peccato, & erit in te mors ista laudabilis. *Origen. in Num.* 12. *Homil.* 7.

a very great Truth; but not, I think, what is agreeable here. I ſhall conſider the words according to their literal meaning, which I take to be this, *That the miſeries mankind is expos'd to in this preſent Life, are ſufficient to make them conſider Death as a thing of advantage.*

Man, ſaith *Job*, *lieth down, and riſeth not, till the heavens be no more*: He goes into the Region of Death; but he does not return and make diſcoveries of the place. The evils of Life are things of Senſe, we ſee them, we very often feel them; but of what ſhall be hereafter the only information we can receive is by Reaſon and Revelation. In the following diſcourſe I ſhall therefore endeavour to ſhew the advantages of *the dead* above *the living* both theſe ways: as they are to be diſcern'd,

1. By meer Natural Eyes.
2. By the Eye of Faith.

1. The benefits of Death, as conſider'd by natural Men, are but mean and low; yet ſomething, we know, they have been able to perceive in it preferable to the Evils of this miſerable Life: and that with relation both to the Body and the Soul.

(1.) As

(1.) As for the Body, they could ſee nothing in the diſſolution of it, but what is common to Brutes: *That which befalleth the Sons of Men, befalleth Beaſts: —All go unto one place, all are of the Duſt, and all turn to Duſt again:* ſo the Preacher ſeems to ſpeak their Sentiments, *Chap.* 3. *verſe* 19, 20. Some of the *Greek* Philoſophers fell indeed upon the Opinion of a Reſurrection; but the Tenet, we find, had but ſlender entertainment: for when St. *Paul* Preach'd at *Athens*, it was treated as an impoſſibility.

Vid. Notat. in vitam Dionyſii per Petr. Halloix Dionyſ. Oper. Tom. 2. p. 269. & Groz. de verit. Relig. l. 2. c. 7.

But, tho' the wiſer Heathen for the moſt part could not hope for a return of the Body from the Grave, they could however conſider it there as ſilent and at reſt, they could perceive an end of all the Labours, Pains, and Grievances of it.

How often does a Man throughout the courſe of no long Life complain of Hunger, and Thirſt, and Wearineſs? How often is he ſcorched with burning Heats? How often are his Sinews, his Bowels pierc'd through with unſufferable Pains, ſo that he roars like a diſtracted Perſon becauſe of the violence of the torment? Now Death puts an end to all theſe diſorders; Sighs, and Complaints, and Cries are not heard in the Pit: The fatal thing comes as an Univerſal Remedy for all kinds of Diſeaſes and Miſeries, and therefore

fore the approach of it hath been ſometimes deſired with much impatience. *Wherefore*, ſays *Job*, *is light given to him that is in miſery, and life unto the bitter in ſoul? Which long for death, and it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treaſures: which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave.*

Job. 3. 20.

(2.) Concerning the condition of the Soul after Death, there has been much uncertainty in the Opinions of natural Men. *Who knoweth*, ſaith the Preacher, *Chap.* 3. *verſe* 21. *the ſpirit of a man that goeth upward, and the ſpirit of the beaſt that goeth downward?* Who by the Light of Reaſon can be certain (for ſo ſome underſtand the place) of any ſuch difference? Or, according to others, who is able to ſtate the difference right, declaring the things of each? Some of the learned Heathen fancied that the Soul, immediately as the Body becomes unfit for it, vaniſheth into the ſoft Air: and the greater number, who were convinc'd of its Immortality, were yet full of doubt about its future Condition and Employment. However, amidſt all this darkneſs, they were able to diſcern ſomewhat more valuable than the preſent Slavery. To be even nothing at all, they thought, was not to be miſerable: and whatſoever abode the Soul, in caſe it ſurvives, is to have after

Vid. Ciceron. Tuſcul. Quæſt. lib. 1. & Plutarch. de placitis Philoſ. lib. 4. cap. 7.

after Death, it could not easily be believed more inconvenient than the Prison it now dwels in.

It was observ'd by *Eliphaez*, that trouble is the Birthright of Man: that it is as natural for him to undergo it, as for the Sparks to fly upward. The sense is somewhat different in the *Septuagint*; but it occasions the following Paraphrase of an excellent Father: 'Humane Nature, says he, is 'inferior to the Productions of the Earth, and the 'Mountains, which know no sorrow either in 'their beginnings or increase. Yea, the Birds are 'allow'd to make their Motions without pain, and 'to gather their Meat without trouble, but Man 'in all these things is very miserable.

Job 5. 7.

Haud absimile est istud Comici apud Athenæum Ἄνθρωπος ὀλίγον ἐπίπονον φύσει. Deipnosoph. l. 6. p. 223. Hæc S. Chrysostomus, & similia ferè Olympiodorus in Catenâ in *Job*.

And declarations of the same kind are often met with in the Books of the *Gentiles*. *Seneca* considering the wretched Circumstances of humane Life, wonder'd at the disproportion between the Inn and the Guest, thence concluding, that so Noble a Being could not be design'd for so vile an Habitation.

Non videmus quam multa nos incommoda exagitant, quam malè nobis conveniat hoc corpus? — Hoc evenire solet in alieno habitantibus. *Seneca Epist.* 120.

And *Pliny* writing the History of living Creatures, begins it with a complaint, That Nature hath been more unkind to Man than to any other Beings. He is, says he, at first the weakest, and always after the most sickly thing.

Plin. Nat. Hist. *lib.* 7.

Other

Other Animals are acquainted with neceſſary Arts without the trouble of Inſtruction; but Man knows not any thing till he is taught, unleſs it be how to cry. To him alone, among all living things, belong Mourning, and Luxury, and Ambition, and Covetouſneſs, and Superſtition. As the Life of nothing elſe is more frail, ſo no other Appetites are more inſatiable than his. None are ſo apt to be terrified and confounded. None more diſpoſed to Rage and Fury. Other living Creatures of the ſame kind live Peaceably together, we ſee them joyn and oppoſe thoſe that oppoſe them: The fierceneſs of Lions is not engaged againſt Lions, neither do Serpents bite one another; but Men, alas! are the greateſt Enemies to Men, the Kind is perpetually at War with it ſelf, and one ſeeks the Miſchief and Ruine of the other.

Indeed, he that duly conſiders the Thraldom of an Intellectual Being, as it is now fetter'd in this Priſon of Earth, made liable to ſo many Impreſſions, diſcompoſed and agitated by ſo many Paſſions, and enſlav'd to Corruption, muſt needs conclude that Man is the only thing, which ſomething extraordinary hath befall'n: that either God, who made him, deſign'd him at firſt for greater Miſery than the reſt of the Creatures,

or

or elſe (which is indeed the truth) that he is tumbled down from his Original Perfection, and become only the Ruines of what he was.

And now it was the view of ſuch diſorders and perplexities of Life which gave the chief occaſion to thoſe Heathens themſelves, to beſtow ſo frequently their Commendations on Death. O how ignorant, ſays one of them, are thoſe People of what they ſuffer, who do not magnifie Death as the beſt of things! Some call'd it the Remedy of evils, the Deſire of the afflicted; others conſider'd it as a thing which rights all Wrongs, levels all Inequality, and inſpires with generous Reſolutions. And by the cuſtom of a whole Nation the Funerals of the Dead were perform'd with Songs and other expreſſions of Joy; whereas the new-born Infant was received by them into the World, with Sorrow and Lamentation.

O ignaros malorum ſuorum quibus non mors ut optimum naturæ inventum laudatur! *Senec. de Conſolat. ad Marc. c. 20.* Ὡς ὁ θνητὸς ἀνάπαυσιν ἴσχυσεν ἔχειν βεβηκώς. Ὅσοις μέγιστον ἴαμα τῶν πολλῶν κακῶν. Æſchylus apud Plutarch. Tom. 2. p. 106. Multi extitêre, qui non naſci optimum cenſerent, aut quam ocyſſimè aboleri. Plin. Secundus Nat. Hiſtor. in Præfat. ad lib. 7. ad ea, ut videtur, reſpiciens quæ dicta ſunt de Sileno, Alcidamo & pluribus aliis à Cicerone Tuſcul. quæſt. lib. 1. Hæc ubi res fortuna malè diviſit — exæquat omnia —— Hæc eſt, inquam, quæ effecit ut naſci non ſit ſupplicium; quæ efficit ut non concidam adverſus minas caſuum —— Seneca ubi ſupra. Τὸν μὲν γενόμενον πρὸς ἅπασι τοῖς εἰσοικίσασι ὀλοφύρεσθαι, ὅσα μιν δεῖ, ἐπεὶ τὸ ἐνθεῦτεν ἀναπλῆσαι κακῶν· ἀνασκοπέεσθαι τὰ ἀνθρώπινα πάντα παθήματα· τὸν δὲ τεθνεῶτα, παίζοντάς τε καὶ ἡδέως, γῆν καλύπτειν ἐπιλέξαντας ὅσον κακῶν ἐξαπαλλαχθεὶς ἔοι εἰς πάσῃ εὐδαιμονίῃ. Hæc de Traufis populo Thraciæ Herodotus lib. 5. §. 4.

We have thus ſufficiently ſeen how *Solomon*'s declaration in the Text holds true, as the things it concerns are view'd by natural Men. And I have been the longer in ſhewing it, becauſe (as it is the Opinion of ſeveral Expoſitors, and as methinks is manifeſt from the foregoing and following words) by ſuch Meaſures as thoſe the wiſe Man was now conducting his Enquiries. To prove that the great pretenders of the World are miſtaken in their thoughts of Felicity, he walks along with them a little in their own Path, to ſearch it out. *He that ſpake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyſſop that ſpringeth out of the wall; that ſpake alſo of beaſts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fiſhes,* ſeems here to take Man for the ſubject of his Philoſophy, conſidering him and his Happineſs, as to be known by the help alone of meer unenlightened Reaſon.

1 *Kings* 4. 33.

2. The firſt thing propos'd being finiſh'd, I now come to the ſecond, to ſhew *the advantages of the Dead above the Living, as they are to be diſcern'd by the Eye of Faith.* A cloudy and corrupted Reaſon can afford but very doubtful accounts of what ſhall be hereafter; but the defects of that are abundantly ſupplied to the Church by Revelation from above. The Great

God,

God, who is the Lord of Death, and whose Commands it always obeys, hath been pleas'd to acquaint us with the things which he himself hath appointed to succeed it.

All the sorts of mankind come, you know, under one or other of these two denominations, *Righteous* and *Wicked*. Now the words of *Solomon*, in the Text, being indefinite, and the Seventy Interpreters having render'd them by such as are expresly Universal: Some of the Fathers have apply'd them as to the former, so to the latter also; asserting that even to Reprobates themselves a speedy Death is better than a prolonged Life: For so their Iniquity (which is the only cause of Infelicity) is cut off, and consequently the degree of their future Sufferings somewhat lessen'd: He that sinks under the transgressions of a few Weeks or Months, being likely to inherit more easie torments, than they that have gone on in a course of Impenitency for many Years. And this Opinion is not without ground from other places of Scripture: The Apostle tells us, that *they who despise the riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long suffering*; that are hard and untractable a great while under

Ἐπήνεσα ἐγὼ σύμπαντας τοὺς τεθνηκότας — Sept.

Gravius est enim ad peccatum vivere quam in peccato mori; quia impius quam diu vivit peccatum auget: Si moriatur peccare definit. S. Ambr. de bono Mortis, c. 7. Ἂν τὸ γὰρ πονηρὸς ᾖ τις, διεκόπη τὰ τῆς κακίας αὐτοῦ τελευτήσαντος. S. Chrysost. Tom. 1. p. 734. Edit. Savil. Simile quiddam habet divinus ille Philosophus Boetius lib. 4. Pros. 4. Si nequitia miseros facit, miserior sit necesse est diuturnior nequam.

Rom. 2. 4. 5.

the continued calls of unwearied Mercy, *do treasure up wrath against the day of wrath*, do encreaſe the Meaſures of Vengeance according to the proportions of their Crimes. And ſaith our Saviour to *Capernaum*, *It ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee*: that is the obſtinacy of thoſe, who contemn'd the preaching of *Lot* was not to ſuch a height as theirs who rejected the many Overtures and Miracles of the Meſſiah himſelf, and as there was ſuch a difference in the guilt, ſo there ſhall be hereafter in the puniſhment.

Matth. 11.23.

In ſuch a ſenſe as this, Death to the impenitent is to be prefer'd before Life; but it is all the while a ſad preference. A Sinner haſtily ſnatcht away, 'tis true, inherits the leſſer evil; yet that leſſer evil is greater than can be conceiv'd; it is ſtill dreadful as the Flames, which the Breath of the Almighty hath kindled, and which are to burn for ever. Concerning ſuch a Perſon as this the words following my Text may be fitly ſaid, *Better yet is he that hath not been*; better is the condition of him that died from the Womb, and gave up the Ghoſt when he came out of the Belly: or as our Saviour ſaid of *Judas*, *It*

Mortuus præfertur viventi quia peccare deſivit. Mortuo præfertur qui natus non eſt; quia peccare neſcivit. S. Ambroſ. Expoſit. in Pſal. 118. Serm. 18. vid. S. Hieronym. in Eccl. 4.

bad

had been good for that man, if he had not been born.

Without a miſerable limitation or abatement, we ſee, theſe words of the Preacher are not to be applied to Sinners; but then to thoſe that have been ſincerely conformable to the Precepts of the Holy *Jeſus*, and have ſecured an Intereſt in his Mediation, they fully agree. Happy, infinitely happy is the condition of ſuch Perſons being dead, beyond what they themſelves, or any other were or are being alive. Death which is the product of Sin, by a Divine and Wonderful Skill, is chang'd to them into the greateſt of Benefits. *Bleſſed are the dead, that die in the Lord: for they reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them.* Rev. 14. 13.

To declare the Advantages of ſuch as theſe, being *dead* above thoſe of the living, is the great buſineſs of moſt of the Evangelical Promiſes. I ſhall put you in mind of ſome of them, theſe two ways, *viz.* by ſhewing you a little,

1. What Death delivers the righteous from.
2. What it gives poſſeſſion of.

1. The Death of the Righteous is to be prefer'd to Life, becauſe of the things it delivers from,

from, namely much trouble and affliction. God hath not design'd for his Servants while on Earth serene and Halcyon days; but leaves them even to more than the ordinary inconveniences of a mortal condition. When that strange Plague in the time of *Gallus* and *Volusianus* passing through *Arabia* and *Egypt*, and destroying mightily as it past, came at length into *Africa*, some of the Christians there wonder'd, that it made no distinction between the Professors and the Enemies of the True Religion. But their excellent Bishop in that admirable discourse he wrote on that occasion, earnestly reprov'd in them so gross an ignorance of the Nature and Designs of the Gospel they pretended to; as if, says he, a Christian did believe for no other purpose but a present security; and it were not appointed for such to enter through the greatest Adversity here into future Joy. Our Saviour seems indeed once to have given his Disciples a Promise of Temporal Felicity, that those Houses and Lands which were lost for the sake of him, and the Gospel, should be made up again by an extraordinary Providence. But if the things mention'd have not (as it is thought by some) a Spiritual meaning, the Promise how-

At enim quosdam movet, quod æqualiter cum gentilibus nostros morbi istius valetudo corripiat; quasi ad hoc crediderit Christianus, &c. *Cyprian. de Mortalitate, p. 158. Edit. Oxon.*

Mark 10. 30.

ever

ever was attended with a bitter exception: it ſhould be fulfilled ἐν παντὶ with a reſerve of Trouble, with a certain mixture or alloy of Perſecutions.

As for this preſent Life, if Happineſs is to be meaſur'd by the outward appearance, the followers of *Jeſus* are ordinarily the greateſt Wretches in the World: for ſo the Apoſtle in effect tells us. *If*, ſays he, *in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable.* Beſides thoſe troubles which (as we have ſeen) are natural to Mankind, there are other labours and ſorrows belonging to them that follow a Leader who conquer'd through Sufferings. Even the gracious expreſſions of his peculiar Love to them do as it were mark them out for a large portion of trouble: and he ſo engageth his Servants to difficulties, as if he this way deſign'd to approve their fitneſs for the Crown he promiſeth. This will ſufficiently appear from the view of ſome few of thoſe particular evils, which are the Portion of Chriſtians, and from the Bondage of which, Death is the only reſcue.

1 Cor. 15. 19.

Invenitur, cui corona debetur: non invenitur, qui idoneus certamini non probatur. S. *Ambroſ. Expoſ. in Pſ.* 118. *Serm.* 18.

(1.) Death is the thing which delivers the Chriſtian from the burthen of his natural Corruption: utterly puts an end to that, which keeps him

him now almoſt perpetually reſtleſs and uneaſie. The ſenſe of much pollution, of a conſtant deficiency, which hath frequently too betray'd him into groſſer ſins, perplexeth the penitent and humble Soul, and fills him often with terrors and remorſe: till at length Death brings him an happy quiet, diſſolves his ſubſtance, and throughly purgeth out the inherent droſs, gives his Soul the purity of an Angelical Nature, and prepares a corruptible Body to be rais'd hereafter in incorruption.

Indeed pollution belongs to *wicked* Men in a degree vaſtly higher: However they have commonly little ſenſe of this miſery. A kind of Lethargy renders them ſtupid under a weight which is ſinking them down into deſtruction: whilſt the Servant of God perceives the preſſure of much leſs guilt, and bitterly complains of it.

His impurity and tranſgreſſions are the things which coſt him ſo many Sighs and Tears; theſe employ him in much Grief and Lamentation. *Pſal.* 38. 3, 4. *There is no reſt in my bones, becauſe of my ſin. Mine iniquities are gone over my head: as a heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me,* ſays the *Pſalmiſt* in his Repentance. And as the Prophet repreſents the condition of an humbled People, he cries

out

out saying: *Wo unto us that we have sinned: for this our heart is faint, for these things our eyes are dim.* Lam. 5. 16, 17.

(2.) Death is that which rescues the Christian from the constant importunity of temptations: 'Tis, as St. *Cyprian* calls it, his Peace, his only Peace and Tranquillity; his sure, and firm, and perpetual Security. De Mortalit. p. 157.

Here we are as a City continually besieged, expos'd every Minute to the Battery and Assaults of Enemies: yea, there is treachery also within the Walls, we are liable still to the suddain Violences of untractable Passions and Lusts, and the wickedness of a deceitful Heart. No wonder therefore that so many of the Gospel-Precepts are deliver'd to us as to Soldiers and Combatants: by which we are commanded to all the difficulties of a Militant state, *to stand fast, to watch, to strive, to fight, to put on the whole Armour of God*, and use it with all the Skill and Courage we are able.

O the sweetness of Peace after the hurry, and uncertainties, and fatigue of War; after the hunger, and thirst, and cold, the hazards, and sometimes wounds of such a state for many Years! *O wretched man that I am, Who shall deliver me?*

ſaid St. *Paul* under the ſenſe, as ſome think, of ſuch difficulties as theſe. The queſtion imply'd the greatneſs of the Bondage, and the proper anſwer to it ſeems to be this one word, *Death*.

(3.) Death is what delivers from the ſpiteſulneſs of this preſent World: from the oppoſition it maintains to Innocence and Holineſs. The Apoſtle recommending to the converted *Jews* the Example of our Lord, preſents him under the following Character, *A ſufferer of the contradiction of ſinners*, a Perſon ſet out as the common mark of Contempt and Obloquy. And the Lot of the maſter belongs to the Diſciples: for ſo he himſelf expreſly told them: *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but becauſe ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

Heb. 12. 3.

John 15. 19.

Moſt of the ancient Apologiſts for Chriſtianity obſerve, that tho' the Religion they defended, was of the meekeſt, moſt friendly, and obedient Temper, fitted, beyond all things that ever were, for the Peace and Advantage of Mankind: yet it was the thing which the World was moſt enrag'd againſt, and purſued with the greateſt Cruelty: 'All other People, ſaid one of them to the *Emperours*, *Antoninus*, and *Commodus*, 'enjoy and 'admire

Athenagor. Legat. pro Chriſtianiſ. p. 2.

'admire your Clemency and Lenity; but we 'Chriſtians are thoſe alone, whom you are pleas'd 'to caſt out of Protection, and expoſe to Suf-'ferings.

And tho' a miraculous Providence over the Church put an end at length to the Heathen Perſecutions of it; yet all its ſufferings of this kind will not be concluded, whilſt any of the Members of it are on this ſide the Grave: the World ſtill declares its malice againſt the followers of the Lamb, true Religion being often treated with ſcorn and gain-ſaying, and ſometimes worſe uſage by the Heretical and Hypocritical, by the Atheiſts and Profane. And then,

(4.) Death is that which delivers from the malice of the Devil, ſecures for ever from that envious Spirit, which if he deſpairs of the final overthrow of the Righteous: yet will not fail at leaſt to be active in contriving their preſent miſery. Nothing is ſo grievous to him, as the Eaſe and Tranquillity of Mankind: and therefore when he is held from making a prey, he will yet run to the very end of the Chain to Plague and Torment.

Eccl. 2. 1. *If thou come to ſerve the Lord,* ſaid the Son of *Sirach, prepare thy ſoul for temptation*: temptation ſeems to ſignifie there (as it does ſometimes in Scripture) a trial by Afflictions: and ſuch a one as this, he that comes unto God, muſt expect from the Enemy of Mankind, ſo far forth as the execution of his Malice is not reſtrain'd by the Hand of Omnipotence.

The moſt High, for reaſons of Wiſdom and Mercy, gave the Enjoyments of his Servant *Job* into the power of *Satan*: and ſo the next news we hear of that good Man is, that he is ſtript of all things, and become as a Leper on a Dunghil. The Dragon being caſt into the Earth, perſecuted the Woman, and made her fly into the Wilderneſs; and ſince he might not follow her, he ſent a Flood after out of his Mouth to drown her.

The Almighty indeed hath promis'd to defend his Choſen, to ſet an Hedge about them, and even a Guard of Angels to ſecure them from the power of the Devil. However the Protection we are thus aſſur'd of relates principally to Spiritual things: as for Temporal, we find Satan put in a Claim to them in his attempts againſt the Lord of Life, by whom too he was not directly contradicted; *all*

Luke 4. 6. *theſe things,* ſaid he, *are delivered unto me.*

Having

Having thus particularly mention'd some of the evils which, being the Portion of the Christian whilst alive, he is only freed from in Death: I doubt not but you will easily grant this last state to be for his Interest above the former. Happier, certainly happier, is his condition then, when all these Labours are at an end, all these Cares, and Fears, and Sorrows are done away; and, as one of the Fathers speaks, no Tear at all darkens the Eyes of him, who now beholds the Beauty of the Glory of God. And yet these Negative Benefits are not all, or the chief part of what we are enabled to speak of. For, Ἐκεῖ δ' οὐκέτι δάκρυον ὀπισκοτοῦν τὴν κόραις τῶν εὐφραινομένων τῇ θεορίᾳ τοῦ κάλλους τῆς δόξης τοῦ Θεοῦ. S. Basil. Homil. in Ps. 114.

2. I am also to put you in mind of the Advantages of Death, with respect to the things it gives possession of. But on this head, being not so suitable to what was the Preacher's design in the Text, I shall say but very little, and so pass to the Application. *Precious in the sight of the Lord*: saith the *Psalmist*, *is the death of his Saints*; upon which place St. *Basil* (some of whose words I but now mentioned) has this following Comment. 'Those Stones amongst the Homil. in Psal. 115.

'lovers

'lovers of Riches are called *Precious*, which ſhine 'with freſh and delightful Colours: How much 'more precious then is that thing, which adorns 'the Soul, being now purg'd from all its ſtains 'and ſpots, with a Luſter beyond that of all 'the Jewels or Precious Stones in the World! Indeed, Death is the thing which turns a poor impriſon'd Spirit, wearied with the confinement, and ſullied with the filthineſs of an Earthly Tabernacle, into a thing Bright as the Firmament and the Stars, yea glorious as the Sun it ſelf for ever and ever.

Imagine a little what the Happineſs muſt be of a Soul received into Heaven, with the Applauſes of ten thouſand times ten thouſand Angels and Saints; with the Embraces of an All-glorious Redeemer; and the *Euge* of the Great God. Think what the Joy muſt be of Seeing, and Praiſing, and Adoring, and Enjoying him that died for us; of ſounding out perpetual Anthems and Hallelujahs; of dwelling in Eternal Light, and beholding the Face of that God, in whoſe Preſence is fulneſs of Joy, and at whoſe right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore. Think upon theſe, and ſuch things as theſe, which Death gives the Chriſtian poſſeſſion of, and then certainly in reſpect of ſuch Perſons, you will be ready

ready to joyn with the Preacher, *and praise the dead, which are already dead, more than the living, which are yet alive.*

And yet after we have thus fill'd our Minds with the most Glorious Ideas, and form'd a Notion of the highest Happiness which can be imagined, we still know but in part, and see through a Glass darkly. We cannot possibly reach the things we aim at, or have any just conception of those ineffable Pleasures. *As it doth not yet appear what we shall be; so Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive the things which God hath prepar'd for them that love him.*

The preference which *Solomon* gives *the dead* before *the living*, being to be allow'd; that which I have farther to do, Brethren, is, to perswade you to a Practical as well as a Speculative belief of this, so to behave your selves, and to act upon all occasions, as if you were in good earnest convinc'd of it. Particularly to manifest the Faith of those Advantages the true Christian finds in Death beyond those of Life (for that is the sense I shall chiefly have regard to now in the Application) in the three following Instances.

1. A contempt of this preſent Condition.
2. A comfortable expectation of a Diſcharge from it.
3. Contentment, on the Departure of our Chriſtian Friends.

1. A contempt of this preſent Life. We have great reaſon you ſee to think very meanly of it, ſince its Excellencies, which tempt and allure us, and that we are apt ſo paſſionately to court, cannot vie with the Grave. We have had a deſcription of ſome of the troubles this ſtate brings upon us, both as Men and as Chriſtians. And conſider I pray you now a little, whether any thing mixt with Ingredients of ſo much bitterneſs, can indeed pleaſe our Taſte, or draw our Affection?

Was ever the Priſoner in love with his Dungeon, or the Gally-ſlave with his Chain? Can Men long for Affliction, or deſire to make Tears their Meat? No ſure, one would think ſuch things ſhould not raiſe our Appetites, or become very Inviting. And can we then, Chriſtians, doat upon our preſent Condition, be ſo hugely ſolicitous, ſo full of Endeavour to prolong our Torment, and continue yet a little while more in that

that Life which is our Misery? Take the Wings of Meditation, and with the Dove, sent out of the Ark, fly through this Tempestuous World: See whether there be any Hillock to rest upon, any Spot which the Deluge hath not covered. Observe how all things are overflown with Cares, what a strange maze of Uncertainties and Disappointments we always walk in: how deceitful all Earthly Pleasures are, like the Apples growing on the Banks of the Lake of *Sodom*, only well-coloured Ashes. Think thus on the condition of things here below, and then tell me whether this be a state to be desir'd? Whether here it is that we should be willing to set up our rest?

Cicero brings in the wise *Cato*, being now near his end, looking back on the Years he had liv'd, and thus declaring his Opinion of them. 'If 'the God above should make an offer to me 'to grow young again, and to be once more an 'Infant, I would with all earnestness refuse it. I 'would by no means be set back to the begin-'ning of the Race I have run, and live the 'Years that are past over again. For what has 'this Life of Benefit? What has it not of La-'bour, &c. Could a Heathen be thus sensible of the troubles of living, how much more must

Cato Major, sive de Senectute, sub finem.

the true Christian? He whose Life hath not only been expos'd to the common Lot of Humanity, but to the Labours, the Difficulties, the Watchings, the Fastings, the Strivings, the Conflicts, the Groans, the Tears of a Condition of Temptations, of a Self-denying Religion.

If, according to the saying of an ancient Father, it be allowable for that Person to be desirous of Life, whom the World fawns upon, whom a flattering and deceitful Age allures with the Baits of Earthly Pleasures; yet certainly the labouring, the panting Christian is under no such Temptation. A Person in his Circumstances, one would think, should be so far from being in love with this mortal Condition, that did he not know it to be his Duty not to deliver up this Fort of his Body, which the Great King hath entrusted him with, till a Summons comes from him, he would earnestly desire to be rid of it as soon as may be. Had he not learnt with S. *Paul* in every state to be content, he would be even impatient in that request of his, to depart hence, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

Ejus est in mundo diu velle remanere, quem mundus oblectat, quem seculum blandiens atque decipiens illecebris terrenæ voluptatis invitat. S. *Cyprian. de Mortalit. p.* 165.

2. The

2. The next thing I am to perſwade you to, from the Conſideration of the Advantages of Death above Life, is, a comfortable expectation of a Diſcharge from it. To put off thoſe Fears of an approaching Diſſolution, which are apt to diſquiet us, and to meet it with evenneſs of Temper, and a holy Chearfulneſs.

The Preacher's declaration being indeed not to be applied to ſome, but only with the ſad Exceptions and Limitations already noted; I cannot direct what I now ſay to every one: Yea, I do adviſe you, my Brethren, not to be overhaſty in arrogating to your ſelves Comforts of ſuch a nature as this is. Strong aſſurances of Infinite Happineſs in another World are the rewards of ſtrong Chriſtians, and to obtain them, meddle not with the unſearchable Decrees of God Almighty; but enquire into your Lives paſt, and try whether you can find there that you are the Perſons to whom the Promiſes are made. He alone hath ground for ſuch a Comfortable dependance, whoſe Conſcience witneſſeth to the Truth of this, that his Faith hath been active, that he hath endeavour'd, and doth ſtill, with all his power, to be void of offence towards God, and towards Man.

And now to you, all you that are thus Chriſtians not in name or profeſſion alone, but in deed and in truth: To you I ſay, be not diſcouraged when Death ſhall begin to look you in the Face; to uſe our Saviour's words which he ſpake on a different occaſion, *look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.*

Luke 22. 28.

Socrates, who tho' a Heathen, ſuffer'd for a great Article of our Faith; and whom therefore *Juſtin Martyr* doubts not to call in part a Chriſtian, is ſaid to have refreſh'd himſelf with ſuch Meditations as theſe which follow, between his Condemnation and Execution. 'I would have 'you believe, ſaid he to his Friends, that I hope 'to go to thoſe good Men already departed. 'However, tho' this be not poſitively aſſerted by 'me, yet that I am haſtning to that Divine Be'ing, who is the beſt Maſter in the World, is 'what I moſt ſtedfaſtly affirm. And hereupon 'it is that I am not afraid of Death, as otherwiſe 'I ſhould be; but am prepar'd to meet it with 'a cheerful mind. And *Cato*, before-mention'd, cry'd out, ſaying, 'O the happy day when I 'ſhall be admitted to the Aſſembly of departed 'Souls, being freed from the preſent hurry and 'corruption.

Juſt. Mart. Apol. 1. pag. 48. it. Apol. 2. p. 83. Edit. nuperæ Colon.

In Phædone, P. 377.

To

To ſuch a greatneſs of Mind have ſome few been rais'd by the dark and uncertain ſpeculations of natural Reaſon; but the Triumphs of Chriſtianity have been much beyond it, in anſwer to its greater Light, and Encouragements. S. *Ignatius*, as he was carried in Fetters to be Meat for wild Beaſts at *Rome*, call'd the Bonds they put on him Chains of Pearl. And S. *Cyprian*, exhorting thoſe under his Epiſcopal Care (in that Tract I have ſo often made uſe of) to a reſolution becoming them, whilſt the Peſtilence raged amongſt them; reckons up the fatal Symptoms of that ſtrange Diſeaſe, and tells them they were deſign'd to manifeſt the Excellency of their Faith, to diſcover to the World a Conſtancy unſhaken amidſt thoſe Ruines of Mankind. Indeed this was almoſt the ordinary Spirit or Temper of the Primitive and perſecuted Church, tho' Time, and Eaſe, and a prevailing Impiety have render'd it now in too great a meaſure degenerate and fearful. Chriſtians then were not diſcompos'd on the apprehenſions of Death, when in deſpite of the greateſt oppoſition, they made it their only buſineſs to fit and prepare for it. But,

Τὰ δεσμὰ περιφέρω τοῦ πνευματικοῦς μαργαρίτας. Epiſt. ad Epheſios.

De Mortalit. p. 161.

3. The laſt thing I am to recommend to you from what hath been now conſider'd, is, *content-*

ment

ment on the departure of our Christian Friends. If they better their Condition, let us not be impatient at it: let us not mourn and lament because of their happy Change from Misery and Trouble to Freedom and Glory.

Something indeed is to be allow'd to the sense of our own loss, and the tendency of our imperfect desires; but to be immoderate on such occasions in our grief, is to contradict our own Faith, and to make our selves like those unaccountable Worshippers, whom *Plutarch* mentions, who, as they pray'd to their Deity, bestow'd a good name upon the Dead, but withall, desir'd that they might have none of them in their Houses. *I would not have you ignorant,* saith the Apostle, *concerning them that are asleep; that you sorrow not as others who have no hope.* An extravagant sorrow might be reconcilable to the Opinions of some ignorant Heathen; but are a perfect contradiction to the knowledge and hope of a Christian.

Καταῦχον μηδένα χρηστὸν ἀποβλῆναι τῶν οἰκομένων. Quæst. Roman. Tom. 2. p. 277.

1 Thes. 4. 13.

Accordingly the Office of Burial in our Church (in conformity to the Customs of the Primitive) contains not Lamentations; but is a kind of holy Triumph, a publick declaration of Joy and Thankfulness for the Blessedness of the Dead. When

When we join'd in it but now at the Interment of our departed Brother, we did in effect ſay ſuch words as theſe: Now the time, the happy time of Releaſe is come, when a Chriſtian expos'd to Griefs and Sorrows, Wearineſs and Temptations, enjoys his everlaſting Freedom. At length he is deliver'd from all the hurry and noiſe of a troubleſome World, from all the ſtrivings, and buſtle, and contentions of it: particularly in the preſent caſe, from that part which it was the good Pleaſure of Providence he ſhould act, from that Office of Magiſtracy, which, I doubt not, he very unwillingly engaged in, and which he conſider'd as his burthen and unhappineſs. He is taken away from all the evil to come, from all uncertainties of event, from all fears and fatal iſſues of things. To conclude, his Prayers are heard, his cry is come up into the Ears of the Lord of Hoſts; all his Cares and Pains are at an end, and he hath found, as our hope is, Peace, Quiet, and Eternal Reſt.

THE END.